DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 430 744 RC 021 881

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TITLE The School Car: Bringing the Three R's to Newfoundland's Remote Railway Settlements (1936-1942).
ISBN ISBN-0-9682594-0-5
PUB DATE 1997-00-00
NOTE 202p.
AVAILABLE FROM R.P.N. Publishing, P.O. Box 23, Whitbourne, Newfoundland, Canada A0B 3K0; e-mail: gazebo.hill@nf.sympatico.ca ($19.95 Canadian dollars, plus $5.00 shipping).
PUB TYPE Books (010) -- Historical Materials (060)
EDRS PRICE Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; Correspondence Study; Educational History; Elementary Education; Foreign Countries; *Geographic Isolation; Itinerant Teachers; *Mobile Classrooms; Mobile Educational Services; Nontraditional Education; *One Teacher Schools; *Rail Transportation; Reminiscence; Rural Areas; *Rural Education
IDENTIFIERS *Newfoundland

ABSTRACT

During the mid-1930s, the main line of the Newfoundland (Canada) Railway stretched 547 miles from St. John's to Port aux Basques, and railway workers and their families lived along the line in small isolated settlements. The provincial department of education, the Newfoundland Railway, and the Anglo-Newfoundland Development Company devised an imaginative approach to bring education to these settlements in the form of a school in a railroad car, called School on Wheels. Drawing extensively on interviews with the former head teacher, students, and retired railroad workers, this book presents the 6-year history of the "school car." Part 1 describes the railway settlements served; the conversion of the railroad owner's private luxury car to a school outfitted with teacher living quarters, kitchen, and student area; the establishment of the program; the first teacher; and the car's inaugural trip. Part 2 contains recollections about life in the settlements served, the children served, the community reaction, teaching in the school car, and the school car itself. Part 3 discusses parent involvement, the adoption of correspondence courses, the hiring of a second teacher, the head teacher's role, and responses to the new approach. Part 4 recounts scheduling the car's visits, moving the car, establishing itinerant schools at settlements off the railroad, visits by the inspector, and the adult education program. Part 5 describes life in the car, leisure activities, summer employment, and the resignation of the first teacher. Part 6 covers the last year of the school and the end of the program. The epilogue gives brief histories of the teachers and car after the program ended. Contains 111 references and over 125 photographs. (TD)

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